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### Friends Support Future To Honor Their Past

Sacha Adorno  
*University of Pennsylvania*

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# FRIENDS SUPPORT THE FUTURE TO HONOR THEIR PAST

BY SACHA ADORNO

DR. LILLIAN A. GIULIANI AND DR. CHARLES (CHARLIE) KOENIG, BOTH V'57, KNOW THAT RIGOROUS CLASSWORK, LONG DAYS, AND INTENSE SCHEDULES ARE HALLMARKS OF PENN VET'S EXCELLENCE—AND THAT FELLOW STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI, WHO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, CAN MAKE GETTING THROUGH ALL THE EASIER.

Friends from day one of vet school, Giuliani and Koenig remain close more than 50 years later. After graduation, both remained in the Philadelphia region. Giuliani started Pets First Veterinary Center in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, where she still puts in two days a week after selling the practice in 2000. Koenig, who retired in 2015, was the founding partner of Limerick Veterinary Hospital. Through the years, they've been part of Penn Vet's alumni network, supporting each other, early career veterinarians, and students.

Recently, to honor a beloved Penn Vet mentor, Dr. Charles W. Raker, V'42, Giuliani, Koenig, and Koenig's wife Sandy came together to support Penn Vet's unique Opportunity Scholarship Program. The late Dr. Raker—one of New Bolton Center's founding fathers and a giant of equine veterinary medicine—started the scholarship program in 1998 to provide both financial assistance and mentoring to Penn Vet students.

Giuliani and the Koenigs each endowed scholarships—the Lillian A. Giuliani V'57 and the Sandra and Charles Koenig V'57 Endowed Opportunity Scholarships, respectively—that will enable the School to continue recruiting veterinary medicine's most promising students.

*Bellwether* spoke with them about their gifts, Penn Vet, friendship and mentorship, and Raker's tremendous legacy.

## ON GETTING TO PENN VET

**Giuliani:** My first job after college was in Dr. Israel Live's lab at Penn Vet. He was a brilliant man. But, after some time, I realized research wasn't really where my heart or brain was. Back then, the lab's window overlooked the stables, and I'd watch Dr. Raker with the Thoroughbreds. They were magnificent, and he was amazing with them. He really spurred me to apply to the School.



From left to right: Sandra Koenig, Assistant Dean of Advancement Carol Pooser, Penn Vet Dean Joan Hendricks, Andy Elser, V'87, Lillian Giuliani, V'57, and Charles Koenig, V'57.

**Koenig:** Every kid wants to be a veterinarian somewhere along the line. I studied arts and sciences in college. And my brother-in-law—Harold Ayres, V'51—was a veterinarian, and he leaned on me to be a vet...Of course, he recommended Penn Vet for study.

## ON FRIENDSHIP

**Giuliani:** Charlie [Koenig] and I both went to the same high school, although we didn't know each other. I am seven years older so our paths didn't cross. We really met at Penn Vet—everyone looked up to Charlie. In our day, the School's classes were so small. You were able to get to know classmates really well. It was a nurturing place for friendships.

**Koenig:** Lil' G was the big sister of our class. She had a wonderful spirit and liked everyone. She was a really classy, strong presence. In particular, bacteriology was a very difficult course. She helped a lot of us through it—she was very generous with her time and knowledge. Students went through a lot together at Penn Vet and that made us a support group of sorts, as classmates and an alumni network.

## ON DR. RAKER AND MENTORING

**Giuliani:** Charlie [Raker] was a true mentor, a very fine man. I was one of four women in a class of 43, and he really led the way for us. More than just encouraging women to apply, he treated all students the same and was available to us equally. I've always tried to follow his example. I believe it's not enough

to do well in life; it's also our responsibility to show the way to others.

**Koenig:** We all loved Charlie. He held everyone to pretty high standards. Although he was tough, everything he expected and demanded of us was to make us better veterinarians. He only wanted the best from and for us.

I've mentored students for the Opportunity Scholarship Program. It means a great deal to them that I experienced what they're experiencing now; that they'll find a way through whatever problem they're having with a discipline. I tell them that we have a common bond: we were chosen to be veterinarians.

## ON GIVING BACK

**Giuliani:** I received so much from Penn Vet that it's only reasonable to give back. The School admitted me at a time when vet schools weren't really accepting women. My education was excellent, and I was treated with respect. All of this was a gift that needs to be recognized. The Opportunity Scholarship Program is a way to express gratitude.

**Koenig:** Veterinary medicine has always been good to my family and me. This Opportunity Scholarship Program is important for current students and for Penn Vet to attract great students. I first heard about the scholarship years ago, from Charlie himself. He came up to me during an alumni weekend and said, "I have a neat program that you're going to want to be part of." He was right.

## ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Opportunity Scholarship Program provides financial support and matches students with practicing veterinarians as mentors. Throughout school, students connect with their mentors and scholarship sponsors for encouragement. To learn more about this special giving opportunity, contact Jillian Marcussen, Director of Development, at 215-898-4235 or [jillian2@vet.upenn.edu](mailto:jillian2@vet.upenn.edu).